

Chapter 26

Teaching in the Future: A Blueprint for Faculty Development

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ABSTRACT

Based on an intellectual exercise that guided projections of the classroom environment in 2020 and beyond, this chapter envisions a future where fewer faculty are affiliated with only one institution and more are independent scholars. Faculty will serve as knowledge-brokers, and learners will assemble their own cohort of scholars and other learners around similar inquiry projects. Tools to facilitate learning will include personal learning environments and computer-based instructional agents. Social practices will include learning content in the context of doing the work and jointly coming to agreement about what constitutes mastery of the subject matter. Faculty development must attend to the interactions among tools, participants, social practices, learning in community, and the learning outcome.

INTRODUCTION

"It's not the responsibility of working adults to modify their lives to fit an educational format, but rather up to the colleges to mold their programs to fit the changing needs of adults and parents like me. For example, offering flexible class times [and] online courses...are ways in which colleges can help working adults go to school."—Melanie, Adult Learner, Central Ohio

"Distance learning is important, but we are committed to current curriculum and what it offers."—Garry, Associate Dean, Central Ohio University

Melanie, an adult learner in central Ohio, is working with two universities to complete her bachelor's degree. She calls for universities to offer flexible class times and online courses to meet the needs of adult learners (Dick, 2009). Melanie is, in effect, creating her own learning plan from the educational options available to her. Garry is an associate dean for a large midwestern

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university that does not specifically address the individual needs of self-directed adult learners such as Melanie. Garry's institution is committed to traditional face-to-face instruction, without which, he contends, students "miss a great deal" (Borgia, 2008). For now, Garry's institution is actively resisting Melanie's request for a flexible learning environment.

Let us imagine the classroom environment in 2020 and beyond. More students will study online from multiple universities, as Melanie is doing now (Chronicle Research Services, 2009). Personalized learning plans will provide learning experiences based on individual needs (KnowledgeWorks Foundation, 2006). Faculty members will become independent of universities, attracting students in an international marketplace (Brown, 2001; Levine, 2000). Despite Garry's resistance, most courses of study in higher education will have an online component; and students learning via computer-mediated technologies will outnumber those who are sitting in classroom seats for the majority of their education (Levin, 2002). Most learners will have been born in a technological age different from the age in which most instructors have been trained. How will faculty work in this environment?

This chapter presents a blueprint for faculty to develop skills in support of the classroom environment in 2020 and beyond. The chapter addresses the following questions:

- What technological and pedagogical trends are emerging that will change the notion of the classroom space?
- What characteristics will participants in the learning process bring to the effort?
- In what ways will the pedagogical mindset of faculty need to change regarding their role in the learning process?

The chapter begins with a discussion of the art of futuring, an intellectual exercise that forecasts possibilities for future events. We will then present

a faculty development framework derived from major ideas of activity theory. In this framework, we posit a learner-controlled, highly interactive, collaborative, and constructivist environment. We conclude the chapter by integrating our forecasts with the theoretical framework and evaluating our futuring exercise against the criteria for good forecasts.

BACKGROUND: LEARNING IN 2020 AND BEYOND

Universities are thought to have been stable learning organizations, slow to react to changing technologies. The idea of traditional learner-faculty interactions is the image of the philosopher flanked by a small group of students receiving wisdom. Yet that image is not true to the innovations that have changed the way many learners and teachers interact. Even in the Socratic dialogues, the role of the instructor was to challenge, push, and improve the critical and reflective thought process using the dialogic process. Certainly, the printing press provided alternative viewpoints to those argued by the master instructor. The development of mass instruction through the publicly supported school democratized learning and required new technologies to reach and engage large numbers of students. However, the skills of instruction may not have changed as dramatically as the technology used to support instruction.

Dirr (1999) suggests that higher education is entering the fourth phase of a technological development that began with correspondence courses in the 19th century, moved to radio in the early 20th century, progressed to televised learning opportunities in the mid-20th century, and entered the age of the Internet in the late 20th century. We can project the influence of the Internet on learning environments in 2020 and beyond through a process called futuring.

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